

From: reed@desertlinc.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/21/02 10:51pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Renata B. Hesse
Antitrust Division, U.S. Department of Justice
601 D Street NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Ms. Hesse

I believe the antitrust case against Microsoft should be settled by the United States refunding the money Microsoft has been forced to spend in its defense and by paying to Microsoft such damages as have been caused by the interruption of its business.

I have been using personal computers for many years. Most people would consider me a computer expert and it is clear to me that Microsoft is not a monopoly. On my home computer I use both Redhat Linux and Microsoft Windows 98 operating systems. At work I use UNIX, Linux, and Windows. This letter was written using no Microsoft software at all. That doesn't sound like a Microsoft monopoly to me.

Personally I do not really care for the Microsoft OS -- I much prefer Linux. I find the Windows interface unstable, condescending, and insecure. I use Microsoft Windows because it came free with my computer and allows me the flexibility to use some very good software programs that were designed by those who wrote them to run only under a Microsoft operating system. Software developers have the right to choose which OS(s) they write their software to run on. If they choose to program only for Windows, so be it. This is a personal business decision that no one has the right to interfere with. If I don't like it I am not forced to use their software -- neither is anyone else.

Microsoft has a right to produce and sell any software they wish. They have the right to bundle this software with their operating system, sell it separately, or give it away. No one can claim the right to make Microsoft work to benefit its competitors. The United States Government should be defending Microsoft against such unjust claims against its property. Yet the government seems to view the men and women who own Microsoft, and the software they have created, as some kind of government property -- to be handed out to whoever makes a claim.

The government has made the claim that Microsoft has used its alleged monopoly to hurt consumers. This claim could not be farther from the truth. The presence of Microsoft has caused a great deal of competition which has improved software and the software industry. For example,

Linux companies were forced to make user-friendly versions with Windows-like graphic user interfaces to keep up with Microsoft. As a result of this competitive pressure consumers can now buy a complete Linux operating system, like Redhat 7.2, with web browsers and office software for less than \$60. How exactly has this hurt consumers?

This whole antitrust case makes me wonder who will be attacked after Microsoft. Will Redhat be broken up because they bundle web browsers and office software with their OS? Will all those who sell Linux be forced to stop giving out the source code along with their software? It seems to me that the government's role in economics should be to prevent anyone from initiating force or fraud. Then they should get out of the way and let the capitalism work.

Kindest regards,

Reed Kofoed

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